



**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
Bureau of Land Management

Lakeview Resource Area  
Lakeview District Office  
1301 South G Street  
Lakeview, Oregon 97630



January 2003

# Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement

Volume 1 [of 4] — *Main Text*



Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan  
and Final Environmental Impact Statement — *Main Text*

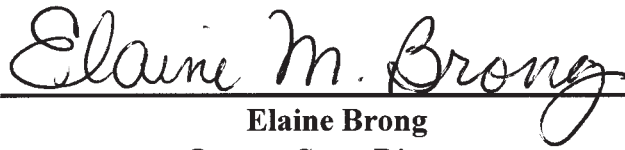
As the Nation’s principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. Administration.

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Bureau of Land Management

# Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement

Prepared by

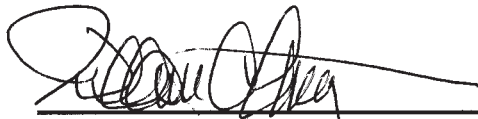
Lakeview Resource Area Office  
Lakeview District  
August 2002



Elaine Brong  
Oregon State Director



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District Manager  
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Lakeview Resource Area



## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Lakeview District Office  
1301 South G Street  
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

In Reply Refer To:

1610 (015)

Dear Interested Party:

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared the attached Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for your review. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS integrates all resource management activities in the Lakeview Resource Area into a single, unified land use plan that will replace all or portions of three existing land use plans and three plan amendments. The proposed plan considers a range of five management alternatives, with Alternative D identified as the Preferred Alternative.

The Draft RMP/EIS was made available for a 90-day public comment in period November 2001. Comments were accepted and considered for up to 60 days after the closing of the comment period. About 320 comment letters were received. The letters and associated responses are included in Volume IV of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Changes made in response to comments are shown as underlined text. Additional hard copies of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS may be obtained at the address above. Electronic copies of the document and all of the associated digital data used in this planning effort may also be obtained on CD-ROM at the address above or via the internet at [www.or.blm.gov/Lakeview/Planning](http://www.or.blm.gov/Lakeview/Planning).

Alternative D as described in the attached Proposed RMP/Final EIS, is the BLM's proposed decision and contains both proposed **land use planning decisions** and more specific proposed project level or **implementation decisions**. Proposed land use planning decisions include:

- 1) Goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines that define desired outcomes or future conditions;
- 2) Land use allocations:
  - one proposed withdrawal,
  - numerous special management area designations (wild horse herd management areas (HMAs), areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs), research natural areas (RNAs), and suitable wild and scenic rivers (WSRs));
- 3) Visual resource management (VRM) classifications;
- 4) Land tenure;
- 5) Allowable uses and restrictions:
  - specific off-highway vehicle (OHV) area and road closures,
  - mining restrictions,
  - areas allotted to and excluded from livestock grazing,
  - areas open or closed to firewood cutting and other vegetative product collection, and
  - areas closed to commercial timber harvest or having no allowable sale quantity;

You now have the opportunity to protest the proposed land use planning decisions contained in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The BLM Planning Regulations, 43 CFR 1610.5-2, state that any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which may be adversely affected may protest the proposed land use planning decision(s). A protest may raise only those issues that were submitted for the

record during the planning process. Protests must be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its notice of availability of the Final EIS in the *Federal Register*. The specific protest period closure date will be announced through one or more of the following: local news media, postcards, or the BLM web site (at the internet address above). To be considered timely, your protest must be postmarked no later than the last day of the protest period. Though not a requirement, we suggest that you send your protest by certified mail, return receipt requested. Written protests must be submitted to the following address:

Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
Attention: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator  
WO-210/LS-1075  
Department of the Interior  
Washington DC, 20240

To expedite delivery in the Washington, DC area, you may wish to send your protest via one of the express air delivery services to:

Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
Attention: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator  
WO-210  
1620 L Street NW, Suite 1075  
Washington DC, 20036

You may wish to send a copy (in addition to the original sent via regular mail or express delivery) of the protest by FAX or e-mail to Ms. Brenda Williams at:

FAX: 202-452-5112 or e-mail: [bhudgens@wo.blm.gov](mailto:bhudgens@wo.blm.gov)

You are also encouraged (but not required) to forward a copy of your protest to the Lakeview District Manager at the address listed on the front page of this letter. This may allow us to resolve the protest through clarification of intent or alternative dispute resolution methods. To be considered complete, your protest must contain the following information at a minimum:

- 1) Name, mailing address, telephone number and the affected interest of the person filing the protest.
- 2) A statement of the issue(s) being protested.
- 3) A statement of the part(s) of the proposed plan being protested. To the extent possible, reference specific pages, paragraphs, and sections of the document.
- 4) A copy of all your documents addressing the issue or issues which were discussed with the BLM for the record.
- 5) A concise statement explaining why the proposed decision is believed to be incorrect. This is a critical part of your protest. Document all relevant facts, as much as possible. A protest that merely expresses disagreement with the State Director's proposed decision, without providing any supporting data, will not be considered a valid protest.

Proposed **implementation level decisions** contained in this document are **not** protestable under the BLM planning regulations. Rather, a separate appeal process will be offered at the time the Approved RMP and Record of Decision (ROD) is signed and made available to the public. Examples of implementation level decisions include:

- 1) Allotment-specific permitted use levels;
- 2) Allotment-specific livestock grazing systems;
- 3) Specific range improvement projects;
- 4) Specific vegetation and weed treatment projects;
- 5) Specific fuel loading and hazard reduction projects;
- 6) Specific recreational facility development;
- 7) Setting appropriate management levels (AMLs) for wild horse HMA's;
- 8) Some specific ACEC management direction.

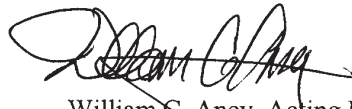
We appreciate your help in this planning effort and look forward to your continued interest and participation as the plan is implemented. For additional information or clarification regarding this



document or the planning protest process, please contact Paul Whitman at (541) 947-6110 or email at [pwhitman@or.blm.gov](mailto:pwhitman@or.blm.gov).

Comments and protests on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, including names and street addresses, will be available for public review at the Lakeview Resource Area office during regular business hours 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment/protest. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

Sincerely,



William C. Aney, Acting Manager  
Lakeview Resource Area

Enclosure (as stated)

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

*Reader note: Refer to the list below for abbreviations or acronyms that may be used in this document.*

**ACEC** ~ area of critical environmental concern  
**APHIS** ~ Agricultural Plant and Animal Health Inspection Service  
**AUM** ~ animal unit month  
**BIA** ~ Bureau of Indian Affairs  
**BLM** ~ Bureau of Land Management  
**BMP** ~ best management practice  
**BOR** ~ Bureau of Reclamation  
**CAA** ~ “Clean Air Act”  
**CFR** ~ “Code of Federal Regulations”  
**CWA** ~ “Clean Water Act”  
**DLCD** ~ Department of Land Conservation and Development  
**DOD** ~ Department of Defense  
**DOE** ~ Department of Energy  
**DOI** ~ Department of the Interior  
**EIS** ~ environmental impact statement  
**EPA** ~ Environmental Protection Agency  
**FAA** ~ Federal Aviation Administration  
**FERC** ~ Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
**FLPMA** ~ “Federal Land Policy and Management Act”  
**HAZMAT** ~ hazardous materials  
**ICBEMP** ~ Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project  
**IMP (wilderness)** ~ “Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review” 1995  
**ISA** ~ instant study area  
**LCDC** ~ Land Conservation and Development Commission  
**LRA** ~ Lakeview Resource Area  
**NCA** ~ national conservation area  
**NEPA** ~ “National Environmental Policy Act”  
**NRHP** ~ National Register of Historic Places  
**NOAA** ~ National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration  
**NPS** ~ National Park Service  
**ODA** ~ Oregon Department of Agriculture  
**ODEQ** ~ Oregon Department of Environmental Quality  
**ODF** ~ Oregon Department of Forestry  
**ODFW** ~ Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**ODOT** ~ Oregon Department of Transportation  
**OHV** ~ off-highway vehicle  
**ONHP** ~ Oregon Natural Heritage Program  
**PRIA** ~ “Public Rangelands Improvement Act”  
**RMP** ~ resource management plan  
**RNA** ~ research natural area  
**SMA** ~ special management area  
**TNC** ~ The Nature Conservancy  
**USDA** ~ U.S. Department of Agriculture  
**USDI** ~ U.S. Department of the Interior  
**USFS** ~ U.S. Forest Service  
**USFWS** ~ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
**USGS** ~ U.S. Geological Survey  
**VRM** ~ visual resource management  
**WSA** ~ wilderness study area  
**WSR** ~ wild and scenic river

## **Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement**

1. Responsible Agency: United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

2. Draft ( )                      Final (X)

3. Administrative Action (X)                      Legislative Action ( )

4. Abstract: The Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has identified five alternatives for managing 3.2 million acres of public land in southcentral Oregon. Information provided by BLM personnel, other agencies and organizations, and the public have helped to develop the five alternatives described and analyzed in this plan. Alternative A is the continuation of present management. Alternative B emphasizes commodity production or extraction. Alternative C emphasizes resource values and the functioning of natural systems. Alternative D, the agency preferred alternative, provides a balance with a high level of natural resource protection and improvement in ecological conditions while allowing some commodity production. Alternative E would minimize human intervention in the ecosystem and eliminate commodity production.

Major issues include designation and management of special management areas (areas of critical environmental concern [ACEC's], research natural areas [RNA's], and wild and scenic rivers), management of riparian and wetland areas, management of upland habitats, management of recreation, and support for local Tribes and communities. The document incorporates those scientific findings from the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project that are applicable to the planning area.

5. Date comments must be received: The close of the 30-day protest period will occur 30 days from the date the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes its notice of availability of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in the *Federal Register* and will also be announced locally using one or more of the following methods: news releases, legal notices, individual mailings, and the Lakeview District planning webpage at [www.or.blm.gov/Lakeview/Planning/planninglist.htm](http://www.or.blm.gov/Lakeview/Planning/planninglist.htm).

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# Summary and Readers' Guide

## Introduction

The Lakeview Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addresses options for future management of approximately 3.2 million acres of Federal surface and Federal mineral estate in southeast Oregon. This land surface and mineral estate located in Lake and western Harney Counties is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Lakeview Resource Area (LRA). The RMP/EIS addresses five major issues and analyzes several alternatives to resolve these issues. These alternatives consist of combinations of resource allocations to address identified issues and future management of the planning area.

The Draft RMP/EIS was made available for a 90-day public comment period. Significant changes made in response to comments appear as underlined text throughout this document. After a 30-day public protest period, and resolution of any protests, the record of decision (ROD) will be issued along with the approved plan.

The approved Lakeview RMP/ROD will replace the existing management framework plans which currently guide management in the LRA. Valid decisions and guidance contained in these old plans are brought forward and will be incorporated into the approved plan. In addition, advances in resource management science, changes in laws and BLM policy, and public views will also be considered. Uses of public land, decisions, and directions will be identified for management of resources, including vegetation, special status species, water resources and watershed, fish, wildlife and wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, wild horses, special management areas (SMA's), cultural and paleontological resources, human uses and values, fire, recreation, off-highway vehicles (OHV's), energy and minerals, lands and realty, and roads and transportation.

The following is a brief overview of the document to assist in your review and to help you better understand the planning process.

## Volume 1 (Main Text)

### Chapter 1

Chapter 1 identifies the purpose and need for the plan, defines the planning area, and explains public participation in this planning process. This chapter identifies the planning criteria used as guidelines to influence all aspects of the process. These guidelines are based on law, regulation, and policy.

The five main planning issues or areas of concern identified through the planning process are discussed in this section and include:

- 1) What areas, if any should be designated and managed as SMA's?
- 2) How can upland ecosystems be managed and restored to achieve desired future conditions?
- 3) How can riparian areas and wetlands be managed to protect and restore their natural functions?
- 4) How should recreation be managed to meet public demand while protecting natural values and health and safety of the public?
- 5) How should public lands be managed to meet the needs of local communities and Native American Tribes?

In addition, Chapter 1 also explains the relationship of this planning document to other pertinent Federal, state, county, and Tribal plans.

### Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the planning area and describes the existing condition for each resource. It describes both the living and nonliving components that may be affected by the proposed actions. Statistics such as acres, numbers, resource conditions, designations, etc., are presented in a number of tables. Applicable findings from the ICBEMP's scientific assessment are also presented where appropriate.

### Chapter 3

Chapter 3 presents various management goals and five alternative strategies for achieving these goals (desired

range of conditions). The approved Lakeview RMP/ROD is expected to provide management guidance for up to 20 years. However, certain goals (such as changes in vegetation across the landscape) may take much longer and may not be achieved during the life of this plan.

A general overview of the alternatives and a description of the theme of each alternative is provided. The five alternatives have different intensities of resource uses and management direction and include:

- Alternative A — No action or no change in current management;
- Alternative B — Commodity production emphasis;
- Alternative C — Resource restoration and protection emphasis;
- Alternative D — Balance between commodity production and resource protection; and
- Alternative E — Exclude commodity production and emphasize natural processes.

Each alternative is a complete land use plan that provides a framework for the multiple use management of the full spectrum of resources present in the planning area. The resource management goals address the desired future conditions of the various resources; are based on law, regulation, and policy; and project the direction management would follow. The management goals are constant across all alternatives. Each alternative (except Alternative E) would meet the management goal(s) of the various resources; however, the means for meeting each goal, the rate at which they would be met, and the impacts to other resources differ among the alternatives.

The alternatives were designed to provide general management guidance. Specific projects implementing the plan will be detailed in future ecosystem analysis at the watershed-scale processes, activity plans, or site-specific proposals. These will address more precisely how a particular area or resource is to be managed and ensures compliance with the approved RMP's management direction. Additional "National Environmental Policy Act" (NEPA) analysis and documentation would be conducted, as needed. This may consist of preparing future administrative determinations of NEPA adequacy, categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, or environmental impact statements.

## **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 analyzes the potential impacts of the five proposed management alternatives (Chapter 3) on existing resource conditions (Chapter 2). There are several general assumptions listed at the beginning of the chapter that apply to all alternatives. Also, there are assumptions listed at the beginning of some specific resource programs intended to guide the reader through the thought process.

The impacts of resource management actions are analyzed by management goals through each of the alternatives, followed by an overall comparison summary of resource impacts across all the alternatives. This summary of impacts includes a statement as to whether or not the proposed alternative would achieve the stated management goal. At the end of the analysis of each resource program is a discussion of indirect, secondary, and cumulative impacts.

## **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 summarizes key events in the consultation and coordination process prior to and during preparation of the RMP/EIS. It also lists those agencies, organizations, and individuals who were contacted or provided input. Also listed are the specialists who prepared this plan.

## **Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 contains the glossary and references cited in the document to assist the reader in the review process.

## **Volumes 2, 3, and 4**

Volume 2 consists of Appendices containing supporting information too detailed or voluminous to include in the main text. Volume 3 contains the maps pertinent to the final plan. Volume 4 contains all of the public comment letters received on the Draft RMP/EIS, as well as the BLM's responses to substantive comments.

# Chapter 1 — Introduction

## Purpose and Need

Resource management in the Lakeview Resource Area (LRA) is currently directed by three management framework plans that were completed in the early 1980s. Because of new issues and concerns, and changes in management policies, regulations, and demands on resources, these plans no longer provide the adequate and comprehensive planning direction needed for resource management. The Lakeview Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Lakeview RMP/EIS) will provide the Lakeview District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with a comprehensive framework for managing BLM-administered land (or public land) within the LRA (Map I-1). Completion of the RMP/EIS will meet the mandate of the “Federal Land Policy and Management Act” (FLPMA) of 1976 that public land be managed for multiple use and sustained yield under an approved resource management plan.

A primary goal of this RMP is to develop management practices that ensure long-term sustainability of a healthy and productive landscape. A RMP is a set of comprehensive, long-range decisions concerning the use and management of resources administered by the BLM. In general, the RMP does two things: (1) it provides an overview of goals, objectives, and needs associated with public lands management, and (2) it resolves multiple use conflicts or issues.

## Planning Area

The planning area includes all of the LRA except for approximately 31,500 acres administered by the Burns District and addressed in the Three Rivers RMP (USDI-BLM 1992). In addition, the planning area includes approximately 2,172 acres in the Surprise Field Office in California that the LRA has responsibility for managing through a cooperative agreement. Map I-1 shows the relationship between the district boundary and the RMP planning area. For the purposes of this document, the terms LRA, RMP area, and planning area are synonymous. The LRA covers over 3.2 million acres (Table 1-1) of BLM-administered land, most of which is in Lake County and some in Harney County. BLM-administered land, or public land, is generally well-blocked.

The planning area is bordered on the east by the Burns

BLM District; on the south by the Modoc National Forest, Sheldon National Antelope Refuge, and BLM Surprise Field Office in Nevada and California; on the west by the Fremont and Deschutes National Forests; and on the north by the Prineville BLM District. Most of the public land is contiguous. Some scattered parcels occur in the north end of Lake County around Christmas Valley and in the south end of the county near Lakeview.

## Existing Management Plans

The current management direction for the LRA is in three existing management framework plans: the “Warner Lakes,” “Lost River,” and “High Desert Management Framework Plans” (USDI-BLM 1983a, 1983b, 1983c), as amended (USDI-BLM 1989b, 1996d); and the “Lakeview Grazing Management Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision” (USDI-BLM 1982a, 1982b). Any management action proposed within the resource area must conform to the direction in these documents. Actions that do not conform require a plan amendment or must be dropped from consideration. To date, three plan amendments have been completed. The “Warner Lakes Management Framework Plan” was amended in 1989 to officially designate the Warner Wetlands area as an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and to prescribe special management direction. The “High Desert Management Framework Plan” was amended in 1996 to officially designate the Lake Abert area as an ACEC and to prescribe special management for the area. The “Warner Lakes Management Framework Plan” was amended in December 1998 to adopt a proposal for exchange of land jurisdiction between the BLM, LRA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. The two agencies initiated joint planning in 1997 to transfer 12,880 acres of BLM-managed lands to the refuge, and to transfer 7,870 acres of lands managed by the Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge to the LRA. However, before the final plan amendment was completed, congressional legislation authorizing the transfer was signed in late 1998. Those decisions from the management framework plans, as amended, that are still valid have been incorporated into the Lakeview RMP/EIS, which will supercede all previous planning documents.



**Table 1-1.—Land ownership/administration by county within the Lakeview Resource Area**

Ownership/administration	Lake County	Harney County	Washoe County (Nevada)	Total
Bureau of Land Management				
Public domain	2,333,304	744,907	2,172	3,080,383
Acquired lands	81,032	0	0	81,032
Subtotal	2,414,336	744,907	2,172	3,161,415
U.S. Forest Service	264	0	0	264
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	625	0	0	625
Department of Defense	2,623	0	0	2,623
Oregon State lands	111,187	15,974	0	127,161
Private	817,204	38,148	93	855,445
Other <sup>1</sup>	78,504	0	0	78,504
Grand totals	3,424,743	799,029	2,265	4,226,037

<sup>1</sup> Constitutes meander-surveyed lake beds, local government, and acres of unknown ownership.

## Planning Process

The RMP is a land use plan as prescribed by FLPMA. The RMP establishes in a written document:

- Land areas for limited, restricted, or exclusive resource uses or for transfer from BLM administration;
- Allowable resource uses and related levels of production or use to be maintained;
- Resource condition goals and objectives to be reached;
- Program constraints and general management practices;
- Identification of specific activity plans required;
- Support actions required to achieve the above;
- General implementation schedule or sequences; and
- Intervals and standards for monitoring the plan to determine its effectiveness.

The underlying goal of the RMP is to provide efficient on-the-ground management of public lands and associated resources over a period of time, usually up to 20 years. The procedure for preparing a RMP involves nine interrelated actions as shown in Table 1-2.

### Public Involvement in the Planning Process

Public involvement is an integral part of BLM's resource management planning process. Thus far, public involvement activities have included a mass mailing of a scoping brochure, holding public meetings, meeting with local government and Tribal government officials, conducting a subbasin review (see Appendix A1), and mailing the "Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation" (BLM 2000).

The LRA began its public involvement in June 1999 with the mailing of a brochure that briefly described the RMP/EIS process, outlined the planning schedule, and requested comments on the first major planning step—identification of issues. The brochure was sent to approximately 500 individuals, organizations, agencies, and offices. BLM invited the public to identify issues or concerns they believed should be addressed in the RMP process. A notice of intent to prepare the RMP was published in the *Federal Register* at the same time. This notice also announced the dates and locations of two public meetings that would be held. A news release with the same information was published in the "Lake County Examiner" and in the



**Table 1-2.—Steps in the BLM planning process**

Planning step	Definition/Purpose	Status
1) Identification of issues	■Orients the planning process to the significant resource management problems and land use conflicts in the area covered by the plan.	Completed July 1999
2) Development of planning criteria	■The standards or rules developed by the manager and interdisciplinary team to focus the planning process on the issues and management concerns.	Ongoing
3) Inventory and data collection	■Baseline information is collected on an ongoing basis in support of resource management. Information about all ecosystem components, including human uses, is necessary to prepare a plan that meets requirements and is legally defensible.	Ongoing
4) Analysis of the management situation	■The study and assessment of public land resources data for the area covered by the plan; completes the information base for formulating reasonable alternatives.	Completed May 2000
5) Formulation of alternatives	■The development, analysis, and documentation of a reasonable range of multiple use management options that resolves conflicts and issues and provides a basis for future management.	Completed January 2001
6) Estimation of the effects of the alternatives	■The consequences of the resource management alternatives are analyzed and documented.	Completed June 2001
7) Selection of preferred alternative	■Based on a comparison of the estimated effects and tradeoffs associated the alternatives, a preferred alternative is identified in the Draft RMP/EIS.	Completed June 2001
8) Public review and comment on Draft RMP/EIS	■After selection of preferred alternative the Draft RMP/EIS is distributed for 90-day public review and comment.	Fall 2001
9) Selection of the resource management plan	■Selecting the proposed plan and preparing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS based on evaluation of public comments of the Draft RMP/EIS.	Winter 2002
10) Public protest period on published Proposed RMP/Final EIS.	■Publication of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS initiates a 30-day public protest period. Following resolution of any protests, the plan is approved and a record of decision issued.	<u>Fall 2002</u>
11) Monitoring and evaluation	■Indicates the effectiveness of plan decisions and related management prescriptions. May go on for the life of the plan. Results are used to determine if the plan needs amending or revising.	<u>Spring 2003</u>

“Klamath Falls Herald and News.” BLM representatives attended meetings with the Lake County Commissioners and the Harney County Court to inform them of the RMP and to encourage them to make comments, request information, and generally be involved in the process. The same information was distributed to the governing bodies of the Klamath Tribes, Burns Paiute Tribe, and the Fort Bidwell Tribe. Other meetings with the Tribes have also taken place at key steps in the

planning process.

From August 1999 through February 2000, BLM conducted a subbasin review which involved other Federal land-managing agencies, state agencies, and local and Tribal governments. This review resulted in the identification of a number of findings and management concerns to be addressed in the RMP/EIS.

Members of the public, local and Tribal governments, other Federal agencies and state agencies were mailed copies of the “Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation” and were asked to comment, particularly on the planning criteria and proposed RMP/EIS alternatives. Approximately 60 comment letters were received.

## Planning Issues

As a result of internal and external scoping, the following five comprehensive issues were identified to be addressed in the RMP/EIS:

### ***Issue 1. What areas, if any, should be designated and managed as special management areas (SMA's), including ACEC designations, wild and scenic rivers (WSR's), or other?***

FLPMA and BLM policy (BLM 1987, 1988) require the BLM to give priority to designation and protection of ACEC's during the land use planning process. Since completion of the management framework plans in the 1980s, a number of areas have been proposed for ACEC designation. Two areas, Lake Abert and Warner Lakes, were designated through management framework plan amendments.

Approximately 20 nominated areas were reviewed by the resource area staff. Twelve of these areas were found to meet the criteria as potential ACEC's. Several of these are also potential research natural areas (RNA's). In addition, three streams were evaluated and found to be eligible for designation as WSR's.

#### ***Questions to be answered in resolving Issue 1:***

- Which areas should be designated as ACEC's, RNA's, WSR's, or other designations?
- Which designations are most appropriate for which areas?
- How should designated areas be managed?
- What resources will be protected as a result of designation and management?
- What values or uses, particularly economic, will be enhanced or foregone as a result of designation?
- How would designation and management of areas affect other resources and their management?

- How should the Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake existing ACEC be managed?
- Should boundaries or management of existing SMA's be changed, and if so, how?

### ***Issue 2. How can upland ecosystems be managed and restored to achieve desired range of conditions?***

The vegetation on upland range provides the foundation for many uses of resources on public land. Structurally diverse plant communities provide habitat for wildlife as well as forage for domestic animals. A healthy cover of perennial vegetation stabilizes the soil, increases infiltration of precipitation, slows surface runoff, prevents erosion, provides clean water to adjacent streams, minimizes weed invasion, and enhances the visual quality of the public land. Resource uses can affect the natural function and condition of upland communities.

The expansion of juniper woodlands into other plant communities, riparian areas, and quaking aspen groves and an increase in the density of historic woodlands may be detrimental to other plants and watershed functions.

Historically, wildland fire played an important role in ecosystem processes in the resource area. Existing plans do not address the possible use of wildland fire as a management tool.

#### ***Questions to be answered in resolving Issue 2:***

- What is the current condition of the various ecosystems and plant communities in the planning area, and how can their conditions be improved or maintained?
- How should the public lands in the planning area be managed to improve and maintain water quantity and quality and to promote hydrologic recovery?
- How should the public lands be managed to maintain the existence, promote recovery, and prevent listing of threatened and endangered species?
- How should vegetation be allocated to provide forage for grazing animals including livestock, wild horses, and wildlife; as well as to provide wildlife habitat and watershed protection?

- Where are noxious weeds located in the planning area, and how can lands be managed to prevent the introduction and establishment of noxious weeds and undesirable plants?
- What is the fire history in the planning area, and what is the appropriate role of fire in the management of vegetation resources on the public lands?
- Which best management practices (BMP's) should be implemented to improve and protect watersheds?

***Issue 3. How can riparian areas and wetlands be managed to protect, maintain, and restore their natural functions?***

The vegetation in riparian areas and wetlands provides the foundation for many uses of resources on public land. Structurally diverse plant communities provide habitat for wildlife as well as forage for livestock. In addition, healthy riparian areas and wetlands stabilize the soil, act as a sponge releasing water throughout the year, prevent erosion, and improve water quality for adjacent streams. Some resource uses affect the natural function and condition of riparian areas and wetlands. These uses include livestock grazing, recreation, forest and woodland management, mineral exploration and mining, road construction and maintenance, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use.

***Questions to be answered in resolving Issue 3:***

- How should riparian vegetation communities be managed to improve or maintain proper functioning condition?
- What kind of resource uses can be allowed in riparian areas without degrading riparian conditions?
- How should riparian systems be managed to improve or maintain habitat quality for fish, wildlife, plants, and invertebrates?
- How should riparian and wetland areas be managed to incorporate State of Oregon water quality standards and approved management plans addressing water quality concerns?
- How should management actions in upland ecosystems be developed or designed to be compatible

with the needs of riparian communities?

- Which BMP's should be implemented to reduce erosion into streams?

***Issue 4. How should recreation be managed to meet public demand while protecting natural values and health and safety of the public?***

Recreation use in the resource area is increasing, especially in north Lake County. There is a demand for both developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities. OHV use needs to be managed, including determining appropriate designations for areas in the LRA regarding OHV use. There is an increasing demand for access to the LRA by "outdoor therapy" groups. This increasing use has resulted in conflicts with local residents. Hunting, camping, fishing, rock hounding, sightseeing, and pleasure driving are the most common recreation activities in the LRA.

***Questions to be answered in resolving Issue 4:***

- What types and levels of recreation should the planning area provide?
- What role should BLM serve in promoting or providing opportunities for tourism?
- How should outdoor therapy groups be managed to meet the needs of these groups while ensuring safety of the public and adjacent property owners?
- Should other recreation sites be developed to provide for public use?
- Can high use recreation areas such as the Sand Dunes be managed to allow continued recreation use while protecting resources? If so, how?
- How should the special/extensive recreation management areas be managed?
- Is there a need for any additional roads to provide access to areas currently inaccessible to BLM, commercial interests, or the public?
- Which areas should be designated open, limited, or closed to OHV use?
- Which roads, if any, should be closed or limited in their use?

- What roads, if any, are appropriate for special designations such as back country byways or back country discovery routes?

***Issue 5. How should public lands be managed to meet the needs of local communities and Native American Tribes?***

The communities in the resource area are generally small and isolated. As such, they have a great reliance on the public lands, including those in the national forest, to provide economic benefits to local communities, including jobs. In addition, a number of Native American groups consider the resource area part of their ancestral homelands and want to continue to have access to the land for ceremonial and religious purposes and to hunt wildlife and gather plants for various traditional uses.

***Questions to be answered in resolving Issue 5:***

- What is an appropriate role for BLM in providing support to local communities?
- How should the public lands be managed to provide economic support to local communities?
- How should the public lands be managed to meet the needs of Tribal self-sufficiency and traditions?
- How can conflicts between agency actions and Tribal needs and expectations be minimized or avoided?

**Issues Eliminated from Detailed Study**

During the scoping process and the initial phases of plan development, a number of alternatives and issues were identified, and after discussion and review, were eliminated from further consideration.

***Grasshopper Control***

Periodic outbreaks of grasshoppers occur in the planning area and can be a significant problem. The last outbreak which was treated in the planning area occurred in 1993. BLM has a memorandum of understanding (which may be reviewed annually as needed) with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) for the control of grasshoppers on public lands in the district. The “Rangeland Grasshopper Cooperative Management Program EIS for the Western States” was completed by USDA-APHIS in 1987 and is currently being

updated. An environmental assessment of the local effects of the USDA-APHIS control was completed for the Lakeview District (Lake and Klamath Counties) in 1995 and tiers to the programmatic EIS. Grasshopper control in the planning area was not considered to be a planning issue.

***Determination that Lands are Chiefly Valuable for Grazing***

One issue that has been raised in the recent past relates to making a determination of which lands within the resource area are “. . . chiefly valuable for livestock grazing.” Section 1 of the “Taylor Grazing Act” states that “. . . the Secretary of the Interior is authorized, in his discretion, by order to establish grazing districts or additions thereto and/or to modify the boundaries thereof, of vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved lands from any part of the public domain of the United States . . . which in his opinion are chiefly valuable for grazing and raising forage crops.” It is the BLM’s position that the Secretary of Interior already made this determination when grazing districts were established.

***Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project Scientific Assessment Findings***

The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) science integration team identified a number of findings from the scientific assessment (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 1996) relevant to issue identification across the Interior Columbia Basin. The Lakeview subbasin review team reviewed these findings and determined that most of them applied to the subbasin review area. These are discussed further in Appendix A of this document. Those findings determined not to be applicable to BLM-administered land in the Lakeview planning area (Appendix A2) have been dropped from further analysis.

***Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring***

In a written response to the “Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation,” the Wildlife Management Institute suggested that another issue be addressed in the plan: “How will the extent of RMP implementation and its effectiveness in resolving identified issues be determined?” This issue was eliminated from analysis as a new planning issue since an overall monitoring plan was developed and is included as Appendix R.

The monitoring plan will be issued as part of the proposed resource management plan and record of decision. After the record of decision is issued, an



implementation plan will be developed based on budget priorities to guide implementation of the RMP. On-the-ground monitoring of resource management actions and RMP tracking will determine the extent and effectiveness of implementation. This information will be summarized in the annual planning update. In addition, a formal RMP evaluation will be conducted on a periodic basis (usually every 5 years) to determine the extent and effectiveness of plan implementation.

## Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the standards or rules used for data collection and alternative formulation that guide final plan selection. Planning criteria are developed from appropriate laws and regulations, BLM manual sections, and policy directives, as well as from concerns expressed by the public and other agencies. They provide a basis for judging the responsiveness of the planning decisions and the planning process to law, guidance, the results of public participation, and consultation with other agencies.

Planning criteria influence all aspects of the planning process, including inventory and data collection, development of issues to be addressed, formulation of alternatives, estimation of effects, and selection of the preferred alternative.

Planning criteria help to:

- Streamline the plan's preparation and focus;
- Establish standards, analytical techniques, and measures to be used in the process;
- Guide development of the RMP;
- Guide and direct issue resolution; and
- Identify factors and data to consider in making decisions.

Principles of ecosystem management, as well as a continuing commitment to multiple use and sustained yield, will guide land use decisions in the planning area. The commitment to multiple use will not mean that all land will be open for all uses. Some uses may be excluded on some land to protect specific resource values or uses.

Appendix B contains a detailed description of the planning criteria and legal authorities used in the development of this RMP/EIS.

## Relationship to Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Government Plans

### Federal Plans

A number of land use plans or programmatic "National Environmental Policy Act" (NEPA) analyses have been developed by the BLM and other Federal agencies which govern how management is carried out within the planning area. The LRA is responsible for determining if the proposed resource management plan is in conformance with these plans. Where appropriate, the management direction and previous management decisions set forth by these documents are used to tier analyses performed in this plan or are incorporated by reference, and therefore, are not repeated in detail within this document (nor are pertinent decisions already established by these documents being revisited here). These plans/documents are summarized in Appendix B.

### State Plans

The consistency of the Lakeview Proposed RMP/Final EIS with various State of Oregon plans is shown in Table B-1, Appendix B. The Governor's office has been given an opportunity to review the Lakeview Proposed RMP/Final EIS and comment on its consistency with their goals, policies, and plans.

### Lake County Plan

Lake County has an existing land use plan developed in response to the State of Oregon's requirements. The plan consists of a number of reports, ordinances, and subsequent amendments governing land use practices and policies within the county (Lake County 1979, 1983, 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1992). In 1992, the county passed an "Emergency Ordinance and Interim Public Land Management Plan" (Lake County 1992) to supplement the existing land use plan. This ordinance does not support the designation of any additional wilderness areas or RNA's within the county, but does not specifically address ACEC's. The Lake County Commissioners and other interested members of the public who commented on the Draft RMP/EIS (see Volume 4) feel the designation of new ACEC/RNA's and the addition of lands to existing WSA's is in direct conflict with this ordinance.

The Lake County Commissioners were briefed on the development of the RMP/EIS on many occasions (see

Chapter 5) and are being provided with an opportunity to review the Lakeview Proposed RMP/Final EIS and comment further on its consistency with their approved plans and policies.

### **Harney County Plan**

Harney County has an existing land use plan developed in response to the State of Oregon's planning requirements. The Harney County Court (Commissioners) were briefed on the development of the RMP/EIS (see Chapter 5) and were provided an opportunity to review the Draft RMP/EIS, but made no written comments. They are being provided with an opportunity to further review the Lakeview Proposed RMP/Final EIS and comment on its consistency with their approved plans and policies.

### **Tribal Government Plans**

Five recognized Tribal governments have an interest in lands within the LRA: the Klamath Tribes, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Fort McDermitt Tribe, and the Fort Bidwell Tribe. The LRA area manager and RMP team leader have met with Tribal leaders of the Klamath Tribes, Burns Paiute, and Fort Bidwell Tribes to discuss the Lakeview RMP/EIS and to identify Tribal goals, needs, or plans which may conflict with or support any of the alternatives (see Chapter 5). The Klamath and Burns Paiute Tribes provided written comments on the Draft RMP/EIS (see Volume 4) and are being provided with an opportunity to further review the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Additional meetings or consultation efforts will occur as the plan is implemented.